

What is claimed is:

1. A security device for use with a disposable strap and a piece of luggage, the piece of luggage having cooperating parts adapted to receive the shackle of a padlock or the like to permit the piece of luggage to be locked closed, said security device comprising:

a linking means for receiving said strap and, when in receipt of said strap, for securely linking longitudinally spaced-apart portions thereof such that, when said strap is operably received by said cooperating parts and said strap is operably received by the linking means, said piece of luggage cannot be opened.
2. A security device according to claim 1,

wherein the linking means includes a lock mechanism manipulable between a locked configuration and an unlocked configuration, and wherein the linking means is adapted to receive said strap only when the lock mechanism is in the unlocked configuration.
3. A security device according to claim 1, wherein the linking means is adapted to release any strap operably received thereby if the strap is bisected intermediate the spaced-apart portions.
4. A security device for use with a disposable strap, a key and a piece of luggage, the piece of luggage having cooperating parts adapted to receive the shackle of a padlock or the like to permit the piece of luggage to be locked closed, said security device comprising:

a linking means for receiving said strap and, when in receipt of said strap, for securely linking longitudinally spaced-apart portions thereof such that, when said strap is operably received by said cooperating parts and said strap is operably received by the linking means, said piece of luggage cannot be opened,

wherein the linking means includes a lock mechanism manipulable upon insertion of said key from a locked configuration to an unlocked configuration, and wherein the linking means is adapted to receive said strap only when the lock mechanism is the unlocked configuration.

5. A security device according to claim 4, wherein the linking means is adapted to release any strap operably received thereby if the strap is bisected intermediate the spaced-apart portions.
6. A disposable security strap for use as the disposable strap with which the security device of claim 5 is used.
7. A security key for use as the key with which the security device of claim 5 is used.
8. A security system comprising:
 - the security device of claim 5;
 - the security strap of claim 6; and
 - the security key of claim 7.

9. A security system according to claim 6, wherein the linking means comprises:

a housing having a pair of passageways defined therethrough, said pair of passageways consisting of a first passageway and a second passageway.

10. A security system according to claim 9,

wherein the security strap includes a serrated, elongate body having a tail end and being of a girth smaller in dimension than the passageways so as to permit passage therethrough; and

further comprising a pawl mounted to said housing to project into the second passageway and adapted to fall into the interdental spaces on said elongate body so as to arrest motion of the elongate body of said security strap through the second passageway otherwise than tail end first.

11. A security system according to claim 10,

wherein the security strap has an enlarged head from which the elongate body extends, the head being greater in dimension than the first passageway so as to preclude passage therethrough.

12. A security system according to claim 9, wherein the lock mechanism includes a latch mounted interiorly of the housing for movement between a first position, whereat a portion of the latch lies across one of the passageways to preclude traverse by the security strap, and a second position, whereat the latch is disposed apart from said one of

the passageways, to permit traverse of the security strap therethrough.

13. A security system according to claim 12, wherein the lock mechanism further comprises a spring biasing the latch for movement to its first position.
14. A security system according to claim 12, wherein at the first position, the latch lies across the second passageway.
15. A security system according to claim 12, wherein the housing defines a keyway shaped to permit access to the latch by the key, the latch and the keyway being positioned such that insertion of the key into the keyway urges the latch to its second position.
16. A security system according to claim 13, wherein the lock mechanism further comprises a slider mounted interiorly of the housing for sliding movement between a first position and a second position,

the first position of the slider being a position of interference with the first position of the latch such that movement of the latch to its first position is precluded when the slider is at its first position, and movement of the slider to its first position is precluded when the latch is at its first position

the second position of the slider being a position of non-interference, thereby to permit movement of the latch between its first position and second position.

17. A security system according to claim 16, wherein the first position of the slider defines the unlocked configuration of the lock mechanism.
18. A security system according to claim 16, wherein the housing has an elongate slot defined therein, and further comprising a button rigidly extending from the slider exteriorly of the housing and adapted to traverse the length of said slot upon movement of the slider between its first position and its second position, the button being for manual manipulation of the slider between its first position and its second position.
19. A security system according to claim 16, wherein the housing defines a viewing window and the slider has indicia visible through the viewing window when the slider is disposed at its second position.
20. A method, for use with a piece of luggage having cooperating parts adapted to receive the shackle of a padlock or the like to permit the piece of luggage to be locked closed, which provides evidence if the piece of luggage has been opened by unauthorized persons, said method comprising the steps of:

providing for the operable receipt by the cooperating parts of a security strap according to claim 4, and providing for the operable receipt of said security strap by the linking means of a security device according to claim 3,

providing a security key according to claim 5 and a supply of security straps according to claim 4 to said authorized persons.